



Combat Airlifter

19TH MXG CELEBRATES MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS OF THE YEAR

PAGES 8-10



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

The 19th Maintenance Group's awards are displayed during the annual Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6. The banquet included food, games and nearly 30 awards given to celebrate and recognize the achievements of top performers from the maintenance career field who enable the Combat Airlift mission.



ASHES OF TRAGEDY:

GROWING TO ENJOY LIFE

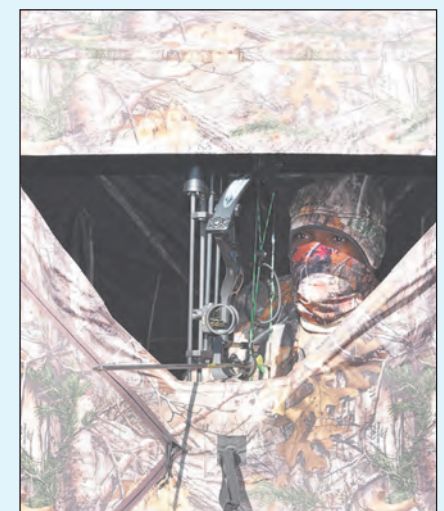
Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley is a prior active duty Marine, an Arkansas State Trooper and not too tough to ask for help.

PAGE 5

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS INDUCTED

Seven Team Little Rock members inducted as newest Chief Master Sergeants.

PAGE 7



INTO THE WOODS,

AWAY FROM IT ALL

People sometimes believe hunting season starts with the opening day of deer season, but true hunters know it starts well before.

PAGE 12

Combat Airlifter comes to a close

19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

For many years, the Combat Airlifter has been distributed every Friday on and around Little Rock Air Force Base on and served as one of our news outlets. It's an indelible part of our base history and its spirit will live on as we continue to highlight the accomplishments of the men, women and missions of Team Little Rock in new ways.

The March 27 issue will be the final issue of the Combat Airlifter.

In a world expecting increasingly instant and interactive communication, research by the Air Force Public Affairs Agency showed digital tools offer more effective ways to reach Airmen and families with the information they need.

We live and operate in a 24-hour environment. The conversation in news and social media doesn't stop and wait for the publishing deadline of a weekly newspaper.

The decision to transition away from print media is the logical progression for Air Force Public Affairs professionals to keep pace with technology.

Public Affairs Airmen will shift their focus from the layout and design and multiple editing steps of the newspaper, to story production that will be placed on the Web and marketed to a wider audience while aligning with the recent Air Force Specialty Code merger of photojournalists and broadcasters.

The 19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office will continue to provide the latest base news, feature stories, photographs and videos on the wing's primary information platform, the 19th AW public website: www.littlerock.af.mil. It allows more timely news stories to be posted online and allows public affairs specialists to focus on getting the Air Force and the LRAFB story out to a wider audience faster.

Our stories and announcements, as well of coverage of events in our community, will continue to be available in non-print forms. The 19th AW will continue to inform Airmen, families and supporters via our digital channels such as our website, mobile app and social media platforms.

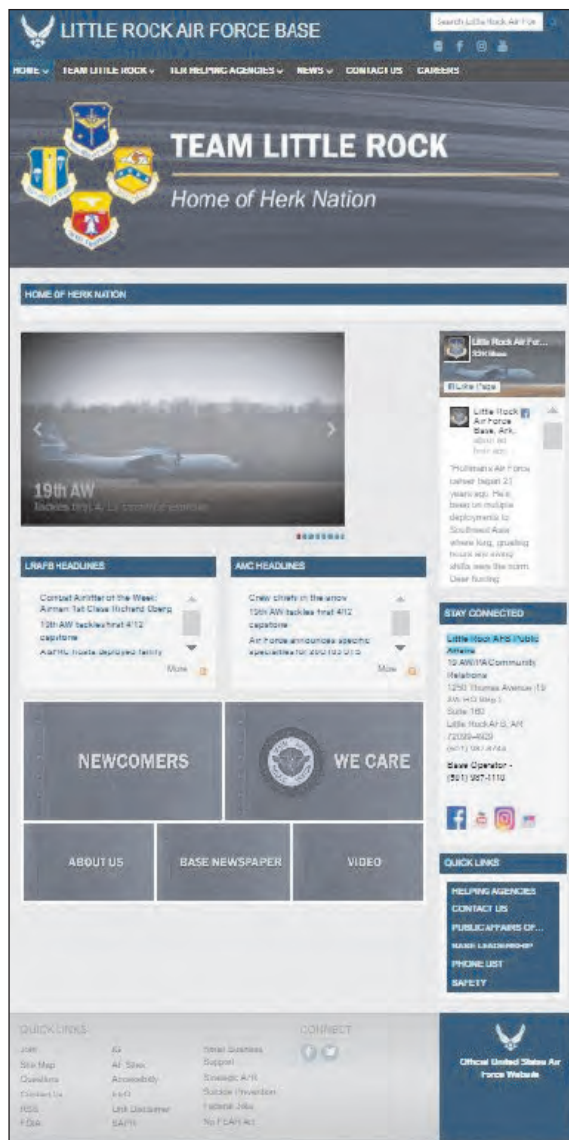
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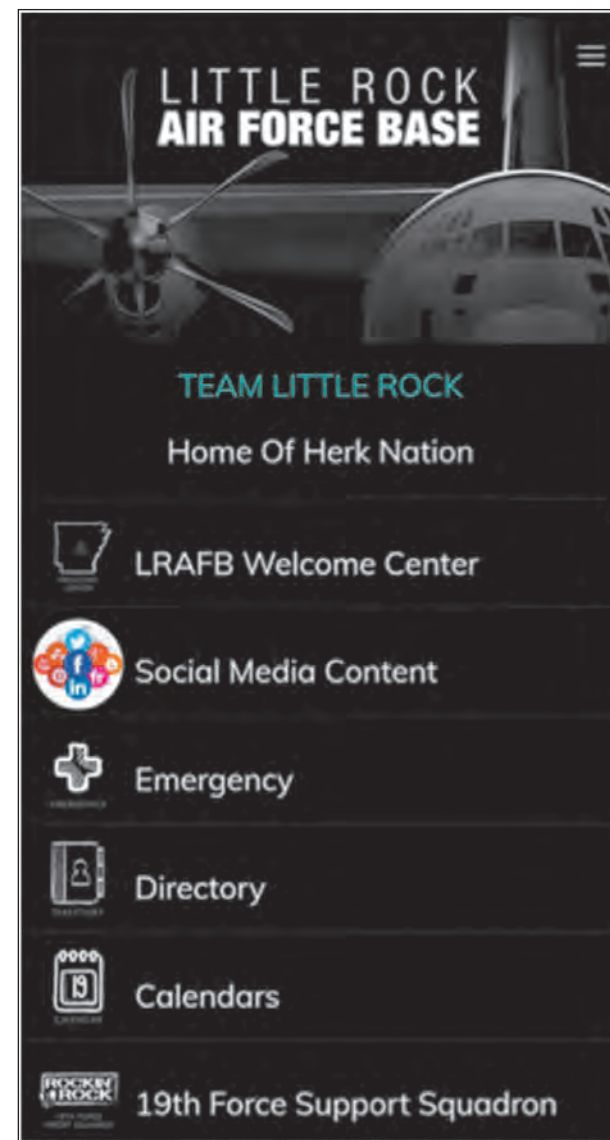
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(Left) Check out Team Little Rock's newly revamped website at www.littlerock.af.mil to find all the latest base news and useful resources and contact information. The March 27 issue will be the final issue of the Combat Airlifter. The 19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office will continue to provide the latest base news, feature stories, photographs and videos on the wing's primary information platform, the 19th AW public website.

(Right) The Little Rock Air Force Base app is available for both Android and iOS devices. Download it today to keep up with all things Team Little Rock.



EDITORIAL POLICY

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COMBAT AIRLIFTER OF THE WEEK



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN KRISTINE M. GRUWELL

NAME AND RANK

Staff Sgt. Austin Wilson

UNIT

373rd Training Squadron, Detachment 4

OFFICIAL DUTY TITLE

Communication, countermeasures and navigation instructor

HOMETOWN

Mooresville, Indiana

TIME IN SERVICE

5 years

TIME AT LITTLE ROCK

4 years

GOALS

Complete information technology degree and promote to senior master sergeant.

HOBBIES

Dirt biking, hiking and working on computers.

19TH AIRLIFT WING PRIORITY PORTRAYED AND WHY?

Wilson was pivotal to building and implementing the first Air Education and Training Command Block 8.1 training course for the 19th Maintenance Group. His extensive knowledge and tireless efforts have facilitated the inter-command partnership to ensure future maintainers to ensure readiness for the fight. Wilson also filled in exceptionally well as the unit's computer support technician for over 100 computers and tablets, all while working toward to completing his teaching internship.

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5-8 PM

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Ashes of Tragedy: Growing to enjoy life

By Maj. Ashley Walker

913th Airlift Group Public Affairs

Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley is a prior active duty Marine, an Arkansas State Trooper and not too tough to ask for help.

“Earlier in my life I had three things that stopped me from getting help when I needed it the most: I was a Marine, a trooper, and male,” said Sheley. “Bad things happen to good people. I believe you have two choices when tragedy hits: drown your sorrows with bad choices or choose to live.”

Sheley met his wife, Andrea, online while he was serving his Marine enlistment in North Carolina and she was attending college in Texas.

“I used my leave to visit my, then, girlfriend spend time and build that relationship” Sheley said. “Once I left the service, I moved to Arkansas to obtain my degree and work as a state trooper. I continued to spend my free time visiting her in Texas.”

Shortly after Andrea’s graduation, they were married and looking to start the next chapter in their lives.

Being a state trooper is inherently dangerous, but training cannot prepare you for everything you will encounter.

As Sheley responded to a two car crash scene. He approached a severely mangled car ready to help.

What he responded to was his bride of 55 days wedged among the twisted metal wreckage. He crawled into the wreckage to assist paramedics as the fire fighters used the Jaws of Life to pry open the debris. Once freed, the medics tended to his wife on the road. Holding onto his wife and hope, Sheley laid beside his wife waiting for a medical evacuation. Sheley’s life crumbled down as his bride took her last breath.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, Sheley threw himself into work; avoiding emotions and responding to support by saying everything was “fine.”

See Tragedy, 6



U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVE PHOTO BY MAJ. ASHLEY WALKER

Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley is in training to become a first sergeant for the 96th Aerial Port Squadron. After separating from the Marine Corps and finishing his degree, he responded to his wife's car accident as an Arkansas State Trooper. He recognizes that everyone has a story about their life journey. What Sheley hopes to do is to help others find healthy ways to cope with hardship.

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Tragedy

Continued from page 5

"I was physically and emotionally drained from the aftermath," said Shely. "I felt lost, confused and hopefulness with no desire to face my family, friends, or coworkers."

To add to the stress, the crash created a financial hardship from the additional unexpected bills and funeral expenses.

After five long years and failed relationships, he recognized that he was truly suffering. "I found Bobby Smith with an online search looking for state troopers who also suffered tragedy," Sheley said. "He was a trooper who was shot in the line of duty, losing his eyesight, and dedicating his life to provide counseling to others. After talking with Smith, my healing journey truly began."

From the ashes of tragedy rose a good life for Sheley.

After seeking support, Sheley joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 2011 to continue his service.

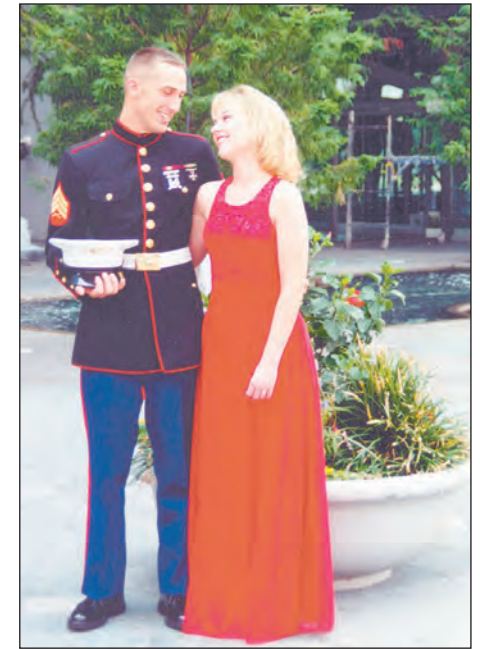
"I'm currently engaged to a wonderful woman," Sheley said. "Once again my life is looking up. My career is also doing well as a state trooper and reservist."

"In hindsight, I wish I reached out for help sooner," said Sheley. "I've shared my story in hopes to help others, from Colonels to young Airmen, no one is too big or bad to need help."

He recognizes that everyone has lost someone or something along their life journey. What Sheley hopes to do is to help others find healthy ways to cope with hardship.



U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN CHASE CANNON



COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

(Above left) Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley, is training to become a first sergeant in the unit and is also a state trooper who responded to the scene of his wife's car accident years ago. He recognizes that everyone has lost someone or something along their life journey. What Sheley hopes to do is to help others find healthy ways to cope with hardship.

(Above right) Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley met his wife, Andrea, in Dallas, Texas, the summer of 1999 while he was an active duty Marine. Master Sgt. Sheley is also an Arkansas State Trooper. Shortly after their marriage, Sheley responded to his wife's car accident. He recognizes that everyone has lost someone or something during their lives.

(Left) The mangled remnants of Andrea Sheley's car after a two-car wreck that Master Sgt. Matthew Sheley responded to as a State Trooper.



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CMSgt Shaundara L. Powell,
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314th MXG

SMSgt Maria E. Foster,
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SMSgt Raymond D. Mullins,
19th MXS

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for our readers and advertisers.
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19th MXG celebrates Maintenance Professional of the Year

STORY BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

The 19th Maintenance Group held their annual Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6.

The banquet included food, games and nearly 30 awards given to celebrate and recognize the achievements of top performers from the maintenance career field who ensure our aircraft are mission-ready to project and sustain agile combat airlift.

See Celebrate, 10



19TH MAINTENANCE GROUP 2019 MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Outstanding Airmen of the Year
Senior Airman Erica Golliday, 19th MXG

NCO of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Brandon Wood, 19th MXG

First Sgt. of the Year
Senior Master Sgt. Esther Keeney, 19th MXG

Company Grade Officer of the Year
Capt. Joseph Kraynak 19th MXG

Civilian of the Year
Mr. Willie Guzman, 19th MXS

Outstanding Key Spouse of the Year
Mrs. Barbara Johnson, 19th MXG

Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award Junior Enlisted Category
Tech. Sgt. Mason Creager, 19th MXG

Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award Junior Officer Category
Capt. Shalin Gieson, 19th MXG

Lance P. Sijan Leadership Award Senior Officer Category
Maj. Dale Winters, 19th MXG

Gen. Lew Allen Jr Enlisted Award Winner
Master Sgt. Kelly Azreal, 19th AMXS

Gen. Lew Allen Jr Company Grade Officer Award Winner
Capt. Michael Comiskey, 19th MXG

Lt. Gen. Leo Marquez Technician of the Year
Senior Airman Erica Golliday, 19th AMXS

Aircraft Maintenance Technician-Supervisor of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Stephen Mcfate, 19th AMXS

Maintenance Supervisor of the Year
Senior Master Sgt. Sedquwick Bell, 19th MXS

Company Grade Officer Manager of the Year
Capt. Joseph Kraynak, 19th MXS

Muns Technician of the Year
Senior Airman Alias Arzuaga, 19th MXS

Muns Technician Supervisor of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Eric Kingma, 19th MXS

Support Professional Airman of the Year
Senior Airman James Marshall, 19th MXS

Support Professional NCO of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Samuel Aguilar, 19th AMXS

Support Professional SNCO of the Year
Senior Master Sgt. Glenn Burnett, 19th MXS

Support Professional Civilian of the Year
Mr. Michael Cross, 19th MXS

Professional Civilian of the Year
Mr. Dale Newman, 19th MXS

Professional Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Griffen Boll, 19th AMXS

Professional NCO of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Brett Clayton, 19th MXO

Professional SNCO of the Year
Senior Master Sgt. Steven Willis, 19th MXS

Professional Company Grade Officer of the Year
Capt. Jon Comer, 19th MXO

Crew Chief of the Year
Staff Sgt. Andrew Sopko, 19th AMXS



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

Airmen assigned to the 19th Maintenance Group perform a Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory task during the Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Mariam K. Springs
(Above) Airmen assigned to the 19th Maintenance Group look at a picture for quality assurance fails during the Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6. This year a new feature was added to the ceremonies: A variety of maintenance-themed games to forge connectedness and strengthen unit vitality.

(Left) Members of Team Little Rock attend the annual Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6. The banquet included food, games and nearly 30 awards given to celebrate and recognize the achievements of top performers from the maintenance career field who enable the Combat Airlift mission.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

Airmen assigned to the 19th Maintenance Group move a power cart during the Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6. The group had a number of accomplishments through the 2019 calendar year, having flown 13,034 sorties, enabling 19,990 flight hours, and performing 123,787 maintenance jobs.

Celebrate

Continued from page 8

This year a new feature was added to the ceremony: a variety of maintenance-themed games to forge connect-edness and strengthen unit vitality. The teams were a mix of junior Airmen, NCO, Senior NCO and officers of varying ages and job specialties competing for the best time, bragging rights and a trophy.

“The MPOY concentrates specifically on maintenance Airmen,” said U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Duane Harris, 19th MXS production superintendent. “This will be the first time we’re doing maintenance games. We’re trying to make it a tradition and move into an atmosphere where we not only celebrate peers and leaders, but come together in a competitive, friendly way.”

The group had a number of accomplishments throughout the 2019 calendar year having flown 13,034 sorties, enabling 19,990 flight hours, and performing 123,787 maintenance jobs.

Maintenance Airmen also supported missions in the Horn of Africa as well as Operations Freedom Sentinel and New Normal.

“Thank you for having done awesome work not only executing the mission, but taking care of each other,” said U.S. Air Force Col. James Hood, 19th MXG commander. “As we go through the next year we’ll continue to do all those things — expanding out our mission sets, doing what our nation asks of us, and developing and growing Airmen personally and professionally.”



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. DANA CABLE

Leadership from the 19th Maintenance Group push a B-1 stand during the Maintenance Professional of the Year banquet at Little Rock Air Force Base on March 6. This year a new feature was added to the ceremonies: a variety of maintenance-themed games to forge connect-edness and strengthen unit vitality.

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U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Holliman, 314th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron support section chief, peers down the sights of his bow in a clearing near Cabot on Jan. 25. Holliman finds himself most relaxed when he is within the tranquility of the woods, helping him remain ready and resilient.

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jael Laborn
19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

People sometimes believe the hunting season starts with the opening day of deer season. However, true hunters realize it starts well before.

As the fog lifts off the ground and the sun rises over the trees, Master Sgt. Brian Holliman, 314th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron support section chief, begins scouting potential hunting areas well before the start of each season. Archery hunting season in Arkansas begins September 26.

"Looking for scrapes, tracks and deer antlers is something I've enjoyed doing since I was very young," Holliman said.

Initially, trying to figure out where to setup a deer blind, a hidden spot from which to hunt, can seem mind-boggling. There are many factors to take into

account and failure to address one minor detail can cost a hunter a trophy deer, Holliman explained.

"If you are just starting to deer hunt I would suggest trying to tag along with an experienced hunter," Holliman said. "It's extremely beneficial to have a guide. You can learn very valuable tips in a day that took them a lifetime to learn."

It was after his last deployment he knew having an outlet to maintain one's resiliency was vital to keeping a healthy work-life balance.

"I feel recharged and rejuvenated after a day of sitting in my blind," Holliman said. "Hunting really helps keep me centered."

Holliman's Air Force career began 21 years ago. He's been on multiple deployments to Southwest Asia where long, grueling hours and swing shifts were the norm. Deer hunting became his number one stress reliever to

See Woods, 13

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U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Holliman, 314th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron support section chief, enjoys the therapeutic effects of the outdoors in a clearing near Cabot on Jan. 25. When Holliman is not at work or spending time with his family, he can be found sitting in his blind, a hidden spot from which to hunt.



Woods

Continued from page 12

help keep him ready and resilient.

"It's not always about getting a deer," Holliman said, who began hunting at age 12. "Hunting is truly an art, a spiritual experience in and of itself. It's amazing seeing how much wildlife is active before most people even have their first cup of coffee."

Holliman takes Airmen out hunting whenever the opportunity presents itself because he understands the importance of the therapeutic effects of the outdoors.

"It's awesome getting out, bonding with my co-workers and forgetting about life's woes for a bit," Holliman said. "Hunting is my escape and it doesn't hurt to bring home your own food when you actually harvest a deer."

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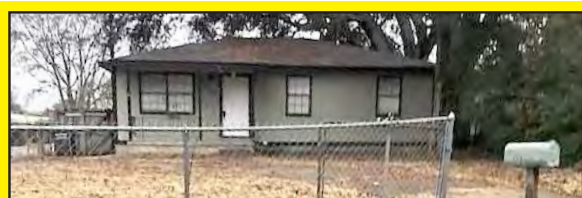
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